

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Mrs. MURRAY. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, again, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Minnesota is recognized.

#### MINNESOTA TAX FREEDOM DAY

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, yesterday, on May 14, 1995, Minnesotans marked two annual occasions: one that millions of families look forward to each year, and one that millions of Minnesota taxpayers await with a mixture of anger and frustration.

First and foremost, of course, was Mother's Day, the day we all honor our mothers for the love and support they have given us.

The second, less well-known but equally significant event was Minnesota Tax Freedom Day, the day Minnesotans quit working to pay taxes at the Federal, State, and local levels of government and begin working for themselves. Every dollar my constituents have earned so far this year has gone to pay taxes. For a total of 134 days, Minnesotans have been working for the government; 85 of these days were spent paying off Federal taxes, while the remaining 49 days were spent paying off State and local taxes.

Tax Freedom Day comes much later in the year to Minnesota than it does to the Nation at large, which means Minnesotans spend longer than most Americans working to pay off their tax bills.

For the average American taxpayer, Tax Freedom Day is on May 6, but Minnesotans must work more than a week longer for Uncle Sam and his cousins at the State and local levels.

My constituents are encumbered with the sixth highest tax rate in the country. The only States whose Tax Freedom Days come after Minnesota's are Connecticut and New York, who both mark Tax Freedom Day on May 24; Washington, DC, and New Jersey, on May 18; and Hawaii, on May 17.

For 2 years, the tax load borne by Minnesotans has remained constant, and Tax Freedom Day has fallen on the same day, May 14. But sadly, a lot has changed since President Clinton's 1993 budget package.

In 1993, Tax Freedom Day in Minnesota was May 9. In effect, the tax increases imposed in President Clinton's 1993 budget have forced Minnesotans to work an additional 5 days just to pay off those new taxes.

These 5 days could have been spent on a family vacation, but there is no

time for fun when you are working to pay off the Government's spending splurges.

The average per capita income of Minnesota is \$24,403, 36.6 percent of which goes to pay taxes.

Translated into dollar terms, the average annual tax bill for every Minnesota taxpayer this year will be \$8,926, or over one-third of their hard-earned income.

Americans face a veritable cornucopia of tax burdens in their day-to-day lives, overflowing with the income taxes and payroll taxes which represent the largest component of the average American's tax bill.

In addition to these more visible taxes, the cost of nearly all goods and services are inflated by sales and excise taxes. There are property taxes, estate and other business taxes, and let us not forget the corporate income taxes which are passed along to consumers and employees in the form of higher prices and lower wages.

The perverse thing about our current progressive income tax system is that as national income increases, the tax burden increases along with it, more than proportionally. As a result, economic contractions tend to reduce American's tax burden while economic expansions tend to increase it.

It makes no sense that taxpayers should be penalized for robust economic growth by extracting more money from their paychecks.

This is why I support tax cuts—real tax cuts—that help American families keep more of what they earn. The \$500 per child tax credit goes a long way toward that end. Middle-class families could save more, or they could spend more—they would be given the freedom to do whatever they want with their money because it belongs to them.

We may never see Tax Freedom Day coincide with New Year's Day or even Valentine's Day, but let us face it: We are about to begin debate on a new budget resolution, one that can counteract the onerous effects of Clinton's package of tax hikes 2 years ago. Let us not miss this opportunity to offer tax relief to America's families. Let us ensure that Tax Freedom Day comes a lot earlier next year than it did last year.

Mr. President, I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### UNANIMOUS-CONSENT AGREEMENT—S. 395

Mr. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 12 o'clock noon the Senate turn to the consideration of calendar 101, S. 395 re-

garding the Alaska Power Administration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MURKOWSKI. I thank the Chair. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from South Dakota is recognized.

#### THE BUDGET

Mr. PRESSLER. Mr. President, there has been much discussion about the budget of the United States that will be brought to this floor by Senator DOMENICI and the Budget Committee soon. I believe strongly we must do something in this country or Medicare will go broke and our country will go broke. That is the alternative on one side. The alternative on the other side is to do something about it.

Those are two rather grim alternatives. Because if we continue down the road with a \$4.8 trillion debt in a \$6.9 trillion economy, our money will soon become worthless. We are already seeing signs of this: the decline in the value of the dollar, particularly the unexplained collapse of the dollar against the yen and against the German mark. So something is wrong in our economy. In fact, I predict that at some point in the next 5 or 10 years we will have a cataclysmic event, economically speaking, in our country if we do not do something now about the Federal deficit.

We also have learned that Medicare will go broke by the year 2002 unless something is done. I have been a champion of senior citizens. I would ask our senior citizens, would we rather have a Medicare system that is broke, or would we rather have one that is solvent even though we may have to make certain changes? So that is where we stand as a country, basically, with this budget coming to the floor. It is a historic turning point in our country's history. We have to make a decision as to whether or not we are going to face up to the facts.

We had a debate on this Senate floor about the balanced budget amendment recently. The Democrats pointed out that our side of the aisle had no plan. They said, what is your plan to balance the budget? We do have a plan. It is the Domenici plan that will come to this floor. It has a lot of cuts; some cuts I do not personally agree with, but I am going to support the Domenici budget plan, generally speaking, because in part it is the only game in town.

The Democrats do not have a plan. Yet, they are criticizing our plan. That is unfortunate. The Democrats have